

HWY-07-MH-007
Huntsville, AL

ATTACHMENT #3

**RECORD OF WITNESS INTERVIEW
JERRID ROSS
(3 Pages)**



NTSB

National Transportation Safety Board

490 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20594-0001
www.nts.gov

**RECORD OF INTERVIEW
JERRID ROSS**

DATE: November 24, 2006

LOCATION: Huntsville Police Department, North Precinct

PRESENT: Jerri Ross, witness; NTSB Investigator Paula Sind-Prunier; Sgt. Ed Cain, Huntsville PD; Bruce and Kimberly Ross, witness's parents

The witness is a student at Lee High School, and attends classes at the Huntsville Center for Technology. His DOB is _____, and he resides at _____, Huntsville, AL. His home telephone number is _____. He had previously completed a written statement for the Huntsville Police Department.¹

At the time of the accident, the witness was the front-seat passenger in an orange 1990 Toyota Celica GTX driven by Tony Williams. He states that the two were alone in the car.

According to the witness, he has been driving about one year. He takes the bus to the Tech Center about 80% of the time, and the remainder of the time he and his friends take turns driving, depending on who has gas.

He states that the bus was leaving as he and Tony got in the car. They pulled up behind the bus at the red light at Oakwood Avenue.

He said that as Tony got over, the car began swerving. The bus was going about 50-55 mph and he believes they were going about 45-50 mph.

The witness's father stated that Tony had about two months or less experience driving a manual transmission. He said that Tony drove well with the manual.

He sustained bruises on his left arm and shin, and a knot on his head. No airbags deployed, and he was not wearing a seatbelt. He believes his shin hit the glove box.

He had never before seen the school bus driver. He usually rides the second bus because he knows the driver, the handicapped bus. He never uses seatbelts on that bus, even though it is equipped with lap belts. He has no concerns on the buses.

¹ Refer to the written statement for additional information.

He states that the Tech Center requires a rider/driver pass. They are not the same. It costs them \$5. The trip to the Tech Center takes 10-15 minutes, and they do it 5 days a week, according to the school schedule.

He states that shortly after Tony changed lanes, he felt the rear of the vehicle begin to fishtail. He didn't hear a pop. He believes that either the bus slowed down or they accelerated just before. When they were by the rear tire, the Celica accelerated, and the shaking got worse. He said he asked Tony, "What's wrong? What are you doing?" and Tony replied, "I don't know." He said the vehicle jerked toward the right wall, but it didn't hit. It jerked back toward the bus and hit the bus. The car jerked them to the right. He thinks Tony might have turned to the left to avoid the wall. He did not see the driver of the school bus exit the vehicle, but he did see the bus fall.

He has driven with Tony "a lot." He said they go out after school, etc. They go to the mall, which requires driving at highway speeds to get there. He drives a Mitsubishi Eclipse and a Nissan Maxima from time to time. He said that the Celica seemed to shift well, and Tony seemed to be able to operate it without any problems.

When Tony got the car, he and his father checked the fluid levels, lights, etc. He's never been under the car, and no mechanical inspection was done. They had checked the brake pads and commented that they were thick pads. He said there was an old battery in the car that wouldn't hold a charge, and so Tony replaced it. Although he was learning to drive the manual transmission too, he had never taken the vehicle up to highway speeds.

He said the procedure for enforcing the driving pass requirement is random checking of the "hang card" that is supposed to be kept in the vehicle.

He reiterated that as soon as they got in the right lane, the rear end of the car began swaying, the steering wheel was straight. Tony put both hands on the steering wheel and may have panicked, because he sped up. Then the whole vehicle started swaying and fishtailing. He said it began in the right lane just after the curve, as they hit the tangent portion of the roadway.